Cult Defectors Trying to Leave Guyana Criticize U.S.

By Gregory Rose
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GEORGETOWN, GUYANA, Dec. 20 — More than a month after escaping death at Jonestown, 12 American defectors from the Peoples Temple cult are still trying to leave Guyana and are blaming the U.S. embassy here for their plight.

Dale Parks, who had assumed leadership of the defectors, many of whom are his relatives, told reporters yesterday that "we were lied to on a daily basis" by U.S. consular officers at the embassy.

The 12 Jonestown defectors, who include several teen-aged children, had left the jungle compound Nov. 18 with Rep. Leo J. Ryan (D-Calif.) and survived the air strip ambush in which Ryan, Parks' mother, Patricia, and three newsmen were killed. More than 900 other Jonestown residents died later that night in the mass poisoning directed by cult leader Jim Jones.

According to Parks, the defectors have been trying for three weeks to arrange through the embassy for transportation out of Guyana. The defectors are not underinvestigation by Guyanese authorities and are not among those Jonestown survivors identified by Peoples Temple members and defectors in the United States as being potentially dangerous loyal followers of Jones.

Nevertheless, according to Parks, the U.S. consular officials told them at one point that the embassy could not give them their passports because they had not been cleared for release by Guyanese officials.

Only after he took a Guyanese lawyer with him to the embassy to complain, Parks said, did the consular officers provide the passports and necessary travel documents. "We had to take a Guyanese lawyer into the embassy," Parks said, "to get our U.S. civil rights."

During the past week, Parks said. the defectors were told by the embassy, which must provide their air fare home under a government program for that purpose, that there was no room for them on U.S.-bound flights. Newsmen and others have had no difficulty obtaining airline bookings on short notice.

Parks said the defectors also were told by the embassy that Pan American Airlines would not allow them on its flights to New York without an accompanying U.S. marshal. But Pan American officials in New York said they had no objection to carrying the defectors without a security escort.

Today, the defectors were told by the embassy they would be flown to New York on a Pan Am flight with a U.S. marshal and two Peoples Temple members from the cult's Georgetown headquarters house whom the defectors fear.

Parks said he told one consular official that his group did not want to travel on the same plane with people they feared might pose a danger to them. "She replied," Parks said, "that 'they have been released to go. If they wish to go on the earlier flight, they have the same rights you have.' "

"On every occasion," said Jim Bogue, another of the defectors, the U.S. consular officials "let us know what they couldn't do for us, not what they could. I thought a public servant was supposed to help people."

The consular officials. who have barred reporters from their meetings with the defectors, were not available for comment.

Court Hears Explanation Of Killing of Ryan, Others

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, Dec. 20 (AP)—Larry Layton says he wanted to kill Rep. Leo J. Ryan, D-Calif., because he believed Ryan and others "were working in conjunction with the CIA to smear the Peoples Temple."

The comment was in a statement Layton gave police that was offered as evidence Wednesday in a hearing to determine if there is enough evidence to bring the 32-year-old cult member to trial on charges of conspiracy to murder the congressman. Ryan, three newsmen and Temple member Patricia Parks were shot to death at an airstrip near the cult's jungle settlement of Jonestown Nov. 18.

Layton's statement, which his lawyer is trying to keep out of court, said: "I Larry Layton take full responsibility for the deaths that took place at the Port Kaituma airstrip.

"I had begged the Bishop Jim Jones that I be allowed to bring down the plane but he disapproved. My reason for suggesting this was because I felt those people were working in conjunction with the CIA to smear the Peoples Temple and smear Guyana.

"I got a gun from a friend of mine, one poncho, and I went to the airstrip intending to bring down the plane. But when the shooting started I started shooting as I thought that it was all too late. I don't know why I did it."

Earlier witnesses said Layton, posing as a Temple defector, got into the smaller of two planes that had taken Ryan's party to Jonestown. As the plane was preparing to take off, other Peoples Temple members on the ground opened fire on Ryan and other members of his party who were at the other end of the airstrip.

Layton then pulled a pistol from his trousers and started shooting at other passengers in the plane he was on, wounding two of them. He attempted to shoot a third passenger but the gun misfired, witnesses testified. Layton apparently had planned to wait until the plane had taken off before opening fire, they said, but panicked when the firing started at the other end of the strip.